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THE
BENNINGTON BATT
MONUMENT AND CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATIO

A STATEMENT
OF THE
Bennington Historical Soc
IN RELATION TO
THESE AND KINDRED OBJECTS:

THE
BENNINGTON BATT
MONUMENT AND CENTENNIAL
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A STATEMENT
OF THE
Bennington Historical Societ.

IN RELATION TO
THESE AND KINDRED OBJECTS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
BATTLE OF BENNINGTON
BY
EX-GOV. HILAND HALL

OF BENNINGTON, VT.

MILFORD, MASS.
COOK AND SONS, STEAM JOB PRINTERS,
Journal Office, 1877.

This pamphlet is composed of a "statement" issued last year by the Bennington (Vt.) Historical Society—ex-Gov. Hiland Hall, President—and an article written by him describing the battle, taken from the Bennington Banner of March 1, 1877. It is issued by Massachusetts friends of the project for the erection of a battle monument at Bennington, Vt., to which project the state of Vermont, by a unanimous vote in both branches of its legislature, at its last session, appropriated the sum of \$15,000, and at the same time asked the co-operation of Massachusetts and New Hampshire in the undertaking. To this end it incorporated an association styled the "Bennington Battle Monument Association," consisting of some fifty prominent men in the state, giving it power to hold property, requiring bonds of its treasurer, and prohibiting any expenditure of money for a monument till funds shall have been raised to complete it. This Association held its first annual meeting on Jan. 10, '77, and elected Horace Fairbanks, President; Hiland Hall, Vice-President; Chas. M. Bliss, Corresponding Secretary; John T. Shurtleff, Assistant Secretary; Milo C. Huling, Treasurer; A. B. Gardner, A. B. Valentine, Olin Scott, Charles E. Dewey, A. P. Childs, a Board of Directors.

The Association was also directed by its act of incorporation to "take measures to secure at Bennington, during the week of the 16th of August, 1877, an appropriate centennial celebration of the Battle of Bennington." Such measures have already been taken by the establishment on the part of the Association, of the Vermont Centennial Commission, a body of gentlemen whose sole duty it shall be to take charge of the celebration on the part of the State.

are, the general government could, with a very limited outlay, mark in an appropriate manner all the localities of revolutionary interest throughout the Union. In this work of patriotism all, both north and south, could join. Our love of country, and our veneration for the past, would be increased; in the memories of King's Mountain and Bennington, of Yorktown and Saratoga, we can forget the serious conflict of these later years.

The readiness with which Congress has appropriated the sum of \$200,000 for the completion of the Washington Monument, and the favor with which this act has been received throughout the country, is indicative of the popular feeling on the subject of governmental expenditures for such purposes.

By state and government aid, then, as our constitution mentions, we propose to build the Bennington Battle Monument; but we do not decline in advance any contributions to that end which the friends of the proposal may deem proper to furnish us. State and government aid may be less than we expect, or may fail us altogether. We design, however, to have a monument, even if only a plain granite shaft; for we are determined that the heroes of the Battle of Bennington shall no longer be thus unhonored. We have put into our own plans something at least of that determination which so distinguished them. They succeeded; so shall we. If any, therefore, wish to aid us, they are respectfully invited to do so by signifying in writing to what extent they will help, or by sending their contributions directly to the Treasurer.

In case of any failure to accomplish any of the several objects for which the society is formed, any moneys which have been contributed to the society for such objects, will be returned to the donors or their legal representatives, with such interest as may have accrued thereon from the proper investment of the funds—a matter explained more at length further on.

The estimated cost of a suitable monument of proper height, accessible to the top, and commanding a view of the numerous historic localities in the vicinity, is not less than \$20,000, and may reach \$25,000. This sum is based on estimates made for a plain column or shaft devoid of ornamental bronzes, such as statues, bas-reliefs or tablets, and built of the cheap material with which the vicinity abounds. In 1872 our state appropriated \$15,000 for statues of Ethan Allen and Jacob Collamer, to be placed in the National Hall of Statuary at Washington, a sum not exorbitant, and given for a most laudable purpose. The State of Massachusetts has taken a similar method to honor the memory of John Winthrop and Samuel Adams; and New Hampshire will no doubt ere long follow in the same good work. The combined sums for these works of art would exceed the sum needed for a monument at Bennington, and that the latter object appeals as urgently to our state pride, our patriotism, our veneration for our country's past and our hopes of its future, none of us resident in this trio of states can doubt.

VERMONT'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

One of the chief objects of this Society is to form a starting point for the centennial celebration of the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1877, the first victorious battle fought after the adoption by the Continental Congress of our present flag. Already the attention of the state has been turned in this direction in the expectation that the event will be celebrated with more than the usual *eclat*. Three of our state organizations expect to hold their annual or biennial meetings here during centennial week. The militia encampment for the summer of 1877 will probably be ordered by the commandant of the military forces of the State to be held here at the same time. Hundreds of Vermonters scattered all over the land, will take the occasion to re-visit their native State. Others, who have at some time in their lives resided here long enough to become identified with us, will do the same. Military and civic organizations, state officers and other dignitaries from different States, especially from New Hampshire, Massachusetts and New York, will visit us; and private citizens from all parts of the country, and the Dominion of Canada also, will be here in very great numbers. A week will be none too long a time to devote to the proper celebration of Vermont's Centennial. Such a gathering of people will have to be provided for. Temporary buildings will need to be erected. Camping grounds of large extent will have to be secured at an early day, and fitted up for the occupancy of the troops, and much larger grounds will be needed for the manœuvring of troops. An excursion to the battle-field is a part of the contemplated programme. An oration, an historical address and poem are also necessary adjuncts of such an occasion. A banquet, fireworks, and an illumination will also be requisite.

To accomplish all this, will require not a little money. The citizens of this town purpose to raise a large sum themselves without going outside of the town, and it is expected that whatever more is needed, the State will furnish in order to properly maintain her own dignity, and extend that generous courtesy to her invited guests which a host, whether individual, municipal, state or national, should extend. The State, not Bennington, is to be the host on this occasion, and the people of the State so understand it. The organization which is to have control of affairs for the centennial week, and for some time previous, is not this society, not even a society composed of the citizens of this town or county alone, but a State organization, which it will take an act of the legislature to call into existence. As the year 1877 is the one-hundredth year of Vermont's existence as an independent State, there is an additional propriety in the State's assuming control of a celebration which, while it will commemorate the event of a great battle, will at the same time commemorate the event of its own birth.

THE DESIGNATION OF HISTORIC LOCALITIES.

The society propose to mark in some appropriate and enduring manner, but in a comparatively inexpensive way, the many historic localities of the town and vicinity. We know now where they are, at least in a general way. The site of the first meeting-house in Vermont, which had a civil and military as well as an ecclesiastical history, can be pointed out by men now living, who remember it as it stood on the green in Bennington Centre. Fifty years hence the men of that day may not be able to point to the precise spot where it stood, unless care be taken to designate it now. Such care has been taken by this Society the present summer to mark one spot famous in the history of Vermont. A granite pedestal for a monument has been erected to designate the site of the Catamount Tavern, on which it is proposed to place the bronze figure of a catamount, by a Vermont artist, T. H. Bartlett, a native of Dorset, in Bennington County, but now residing in Paris. Mr. Bartlett, lately in this country, has recently visited Bennington, especially with a view to this work, which is in his hands for execution.

The exact locality, that is to say within a few paces, of the continental store-house, where were the stores which Burgoyne's army "so sadly needed and so signally failed to get," and where it is proposed to place the Battle Monument, is not now known. Fifty years ago it undoubtedly was known, and had the Bennington Historical Society been in existence then, we should now be able to trace its boundaries. The importance of permanently and correctly designating localities of such historic interest, is sufficiently obvious. This society purposes to do this work without delay; and in doing it, it will not omit the care of the graves of the men—such as are within its reach—who have helped to make these localities historic.

A TOWN HISTORY.

Very many of our citizens are extremely desirous that our local history, not only that of an early date, but also our late history, should be put into such a form as to make a complete history of the town from its earliest organization down to the present time. All histories of Vermont have, from the necessities of the case, been early histories of this town to a greater or less extent; all that are to follow will, for the same reasons, be the same. The interesting volume of our townsman, the Rev. Isaac Jennings, entitled "Memorials of a Century," which is the history of the First Congregational Church of this town for the first century of its existence, is also our history; but it is essentially what it purports to be, a church history, though it is also much more. Still it never pretended to be a complete town history; and as it stops before the late civil war began, a very important part of our town history is wanting altogether. Governor Hall's "Early Vermont" covered a great deal of ground that a new history of our town would go over again, but it,

at the same time, embraces much that a new history would omit; thus leaving room in a new work for a more elaborate treatment of those subjects which relate more directly to our local history, and which Governor Hall was necessarily obliged to leave out or touch lightly upon. The admirable sketch of our town history by Governor Hall in the Vermont Historical Magazine, good as it is—and for the purpose for which it was written it could not be better,—is after all a magazine article, and not a book. None of these valuable works contain a genealogical record of our older families, a most important addition to a town history.

There is room, therefore, for an extended history of the town of Bennington, and it is one of the objects of this society to publish one. It is estimated that enough money can be raised from the sales of the volume, if a specimen chapter is in readiness by August 1st, 1877, to pay for its publication, leaving the preparation of the manuscript to be paid for out of the funds of the society.

A SOCIETY BUILDING.

It has long been a favorite project with many of our citizens to gather together a collection of the relics of the Battle of Bennington; not only this, but to preserve the materials of our early history, and also of the history which we make from day to day, and from year to year. The material of our early history is much of it, fast passing beyond the reach of the historian; the material for our later, particularly for the town's honorable record during the late rebellion, will shortly be in the same fugitive condition. The relics of the late war are scattered in great profusion throughout our community, and should be gathered up and placed in some suitable rooms or building for their careful preservation. To mention only one such—the beautiful flag which the ladies of Bennington presented to the first company which left the town to participate in the war for the Union, is in the hands of one of the officers of that company. He would be glad to commit it to the custody of a permanent organization furnished with proper facilities for its suitable care. The “Young Men's Association,” an organization as likely to continue as the town itself, holding thousands of dollars worth of property, and with a prospect of increasing its value with the growth of the town, needs an addition to its building, the Free Library Building, to accommodate its own growth. It has already fulfilled the hopes and promises of its liberal founders, and has outgrown its limited accommodations. What more appropriate work for this society to do than to aid the Young Men's Association in enlarging their borders, on condition of allowing us to occupy a room or rooms with them, where we can have a place for our library, our documents, our relics, and where we can accumulate these valuable stores of ancient and contemporaneous town history that are so rapidly being swept out of existence for want of a convenient place and a suitable organization to receive them. It is not supposed, however, that so desirable an object as this can be accom-

plished at once. Rooms must be hired for the present, but it is highly desirable that a commencement be made this year, or during the year of Vermont's Centennial, of a fund to be appropriated, when it shall become large enough for the purpose, to the building, in connection with the Young Men's Association, of a fire-proof addition to Free Library Hall, for the purpose of both organizations. An example of the practicability of such a plan is furnished at our hands in the action of our Second Congregational Church and Society in establishing a fund, which by continual accretions has enabled them in the course of ten years to erect one of the most commodious and elegant houses of worship in the State. Their whole expenditure has been some \$60,000, all of which has been expended with that rigid regard to economy in expenditure to which allusion has heretofore been made. A tenth part of this sum similarly expended in connection with the Young Men's Association, would be all that would be needed to give our society a permanent home, and not more than ten years need be required to accomplish it in.

In this contemplated building it is proposed to finish off one room after the manner of the room of the Council of Safety in the Catamount Tavern, destroyed in 1871. The fire-place with the marble mantle, with the words "Council Room" cut into it, and the iron fire dogs are preserved, and these it is proposed to still further preserve in this room as they stood in Landlord Fay's famous old tavern.

A SOLDIERS' MONUMENT.

The erection of a Soldiers' Monument to the memory of the Bennington men who fell in the war of the rebellion, will be a cherished object of this society. Many towns throughout the country have done this work for themselves already. We propose to do it, and the delay in doing it arises from no want of appreciation of their efforts. By law the towns of the State are allowed to raise a tax for this purpose, but such action is not deemed advisable by our people at present. Whenever it is thought best to do this, the town and society will doubtless co-operate with one another in the work.

OBJECTS ENUMERATED AND COMMENDED. TRUSTEES FOR DIFFERENT FUNDS.

The objects at which the Bennington Historical Society aims, have thus been sketched, and some methods have been suggested by which it is expected these objects will be accomplished. It remains now to commend these objects and methods to the favorable consideration of its patrons, among whom it includes all Vermonters, and all who, whether resident in the State or not, take an interest in promoting the work of the Society. Whatever contributions to its library, its cabinet, or its rooms may be made, will be duly acknowledged, the name of the donor entered on its records, and the contribution distinctly labelled, or otherwise designated, with his name. It is particularly requested that contributions of documents,

journals, newspapers, records, authentic anecdotes of our early settlers, or anything of this nature, which will elucidate the history of the town or add to its interest and value, be forwarded at an early day. These should be sent to the Corresponding Secretary.

The resources of the society in money, are limited, only resident members being required to pay, and that, too, only one dollar a year. This fee of one dollar it is optional with honorary members to pay. Doubtless, however, many a person into whose hands this document may come, mindful of the great work done here, now nearly one hundred years ago, will choose to pay, not merely one dollar, but will send to the Treasurer his contribution for a large or small sum, as he shall see fit, to help forward some one of the many objects of the society. Any such contributor should designate the particular object for which the contribution is made. Trustees of the funds for the various purposes for which the society is organized, will be appointed by the society to take charge of any such contributions, and to invest any such funds until such time as the object designated calls for their use. The trustees for the Battle Monument fund have already been appointed, and a small sum is in their possession to be used in the erection of the proposed monument.

It will be seen that the citizens of Bennington design to burden themselves heavily, and for many years to come, to accomplish the objects of the society, and these objects it is proper to enumerate here:

The erection of a Battle Monument at Bennington.

The awakening an interest in, and making preparation for, a suitable State and National celebration of the laying of the corner stone of the monument on the one-hundredth anniversary of the battle itself, and likewise celebrating at the same time the centennial anniversary of Vermont's independence as a State.

The designation of the many important historic localities in Bennington and vicinity, such as the battle-field with the places of its two engagements, the Catamount Tavern, Parson Dewey's Meeting-House, Col. Baume's house, the spot where Stark made his famous laconic speech—a score or more in all.

The care of the graves of its revolutionary heroes.*

The building an addition to the Free Library Building for the society's library, its relics, and a fac-simile of the Council Room in the old Catamount Tavern.

The erection of a Soldier's Monument.

The publication of a town history, and the keeping alive a general interest in the history of this historic town.

For most of these objects, but little outside aid can be expected, though the interest in none of them is confined to the narrow

* The Selectmen of Bennington, under the inspiring influences of the approaching centennial, and aided by private subscription procured by the zeal of Mr. Wm. Montague, under whose wise direction the whole work has proceeded, have authorized the renovating of the old burying ground in Bennington Centre, where lie buried the Bennington soldiers who fell in the battle, and where also the Hessian dead were buried. Several hundred dollars have already been expended here, and the whole work will be carried out to completion this autumn.

limits of the town, and in some it is as far-reaching as the fame of the men who have made the name of Bennington historic. Mainly, however, we rely on ourselves for resources in carrying out our plans; yet in the erection of the Battle Monument, and in the procuring of suitable accommodations for the collection of revolutionary and other relics, we *do* look for aid beyond the borders of our town, or our State even; and we earnestly hope we shall not look in vain. In the State's celebration of centennial week, this society, and the citizens of Bennington generally, expect to render that aid which would naturally be expected by the State of the locality in which the celebration takes place.

CONCLUSION.

Finally, the society would confidently appeal to the citizens of the town of Bennington, to the citizens of Vermont everywhere, to the citizens of New Hampshire and of Massachusetts, to the descendants, wherever they are, of Stark and Allen, of Warner and Baker, of Chittenden and Langdon and Fay, of Fasset and Robinson and Safford, of Parson Allen and of Parson Dewey, of Simons and Williams, of Nichols, of Hubbard, of Stickney, of Webster,* and of all those—a roll too long to count here—who so nobly on the field or in the council defended the cause of liberty in this crisis of the nation's birth.

They would appeal for aid in their praiseworthy undertaking to all lovers of their country in every part of the Union or beyond the seas, for here was achieved, by rude men whose valor on the battle-field was deliberately compared by their leader to that of Alexander and Charles of Sweden, the first victory ever won under the stars and stripes; here was first dispelled the darkness that had hung so long over the land, discouraging to the patriot cause, and disheartening to our little army and its great Captain; here first broke the dawn of that day that burst in full splendor on the plains of Saratoga, and culminated at last in the victory at Yorktown. This spot in importance not second on the one hand to Concord and Lexington and Bunker Hill—the heroic beginnings of the struggle for independence—nor on the other to Yorktown, its triumphant conclusion, is worthy of all the consideration, all the honor which every country in every age has ever accorded to all places hallowed by the memories of noble deeds.

By order of the Board of Directors,

MERRITT B. MORGAN, SECRETARY.

Bennington, Vt., Oct. 2, 1876.

*Capt. Ebenezer Webster, the father of Daniel Webster.

THE BATTLE OF BENNINGTON.

AUGUST 16TH, 1777.

BY HILAND HALL, OF NORTH BENNINGTON, VT.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the following account of the Battle of Bennington, only the leading facts are attempted to be given, numerous interesting and exciting incidents being necessarily omitted. In order to have a just appreciation of the battle and its consequences, it is necessary to call to mind the condition of the country and of the State at the time of its occurrence.

The campaign of 1776 in the northern department, had been disastrous to the American arms. After suffering severe losses our forces had been driven from Canada in great distress, and the enemy, by the destruction of the American flotilla, had obtained full command of the waters of Lake Champlain. Great numbers of troops were arriving at Quebec from Europe, and a fearful invasion was expected at the opening of the lake in the spring. To meet such invasion extensive works had been erected at Ticonderoga, on which great reliance was placed. But they were defective in arrangement, and but partially manned; and on the approach of Gen. Burgoyne, with a powerful army, Gen. St. Clair found they would be wholly untenable, and felt compelled to abandon them. The rear guard of his retreating army, under the command of Col. Seth Warner, was overtaken the next day, July 7, 1777, at Hubbardton, by a large body of the enemy, and, after a brave resistance, during which many were killed and wounded on both sides, was overpowered by numbers and obliged to give way. The greater portion of St. Clair's force succeeded in forming a junction with Gen. Schuyler at Fort Edward, while the remnant of Col. Warner's regiment, about 140 strong, took post at Manchester.

Burgoyne's army, numbering about 9,000 men, was equipped and furnished with every war-like material that wealth and skill could supply, and consisted mostly of British and German veterans, with bodies of Canadians and Tories, and a formidable horde of Indians. Its commander expected to make a triumphant march to Albany, there to be met by an army from New York, and thus, by obtaining the control of the Hudson river, and cutting off New England from the other states, to complete the conquest of the country for the King. He had already issued a flaming proclamation, threat-

ening destruction to the lives and property of all who should oppose him, but promising protection and security to those who should give him their adhesion, and offering payment "in solid coin" for all provisions that should be brought to his camp. On the 10th of July, having reached Skenesborough, now Whitehall, he issued another proclamation in which he *directed* "the inhabitants of Castleton, Hubbardton, Rutland, Tinmouth, Pawlet, Wells and Granville, with the neighboring districts; also the districts bordering on White Creek (Salem), Camden, Cambridge, &c., &c.," to send ten persons or more from each township to meet Col. Skene at Castleton on the 15th, who would "communicate conditions upon which the persons and properties of the disobedient might yet be spared." The proclamation concluded with the following barbarous threat:— "This fail not, *under the pain of military execution!*"

To a large portion of the frontier inhabitants, Burgoyne's army appeared irresistible. If he should let loose his horde of savages upon them, which, in his first proclamation, he said "amounted to thousands," there would seem to be no escape for them. Great numbers from those towns, and some from towns still further to the south, repaired to Col. Skene, and taking the oath of allegiance to the Crown—some from choice and some from supposed necessity—received written protections for their security. Of these many took up arms against their country, and joined the invading army. But the more patriotic and courageous portion of the inhabitants, scorning submission to the invaders, abandoned their homes to the mercy of the enemy, and taking with them such of their effects as they were able to transport, fled to the south, some stopping in Bennington, but most of them going on to their friends in Berkshire county and Connecticut. Berkshire county, in the language of a contemporary, was "burdened with these fugitives." Nearly all of the territory between Bennington and the route of Burgoyne towards the Hudson and Albany, was thus made, in effect, an enemy's country, and Bennington became a frontier town.

Prior to the revolution the territory of Vermont was known by the name of the New Hampshire Grants, over which the government of New York claimed jurisdiction, and also the title to its lands. This claim was disputed by its inhabitants, who, after a long and severe controversy, had, by a convention of their delegates held at Westminster on the 17th of January, 1777, declared the territory an independent State. At the time of the evacuation of Ticonderoga by St. Clair, a subsequent convention of the new State was in session at Windsor, engaged in the work of framing its constitution of government; and the abandonment of that post left the families of many of its members in immediate peril. At the news of this alarming event the constitution was somewhat hurriedly adopted, and having appointed a Council of Safety to manage the affairs of the State until the regular government could be put in operation, the convention adjourned.

The Council of Safety thus constituted, met first at Manches-

ter, but soon adjourned to Bennington, where it continued in permanent session throughout the year, adopting and carrying into effect the most energetic measures for protecting the State against its foreign as well as its domestic enemies. Pressing messages having been sent to New Hampshire and Massachusetts for aid, such of the militia as could be gathered were called out to strengthen the force of Col. Warner of Manchester, where an attack was apprehended. A permanent force to patrol the frontiers and to guard against any covert outbreak of the Tories in their midst, was indispensable; and to provide means for maintaining such a force and to meet their other expenses in defending the State, the Council ordered the property of those of their inhabitants that had joined the enemy to be sequestered and sold. A proper fund being thus secured, a regiment of Rangers was organized under the command of Col. Samuel Herrick, which did efficient and valuable service to the State and country.

New Hampshire responded nobly to the call of the Vermont Council. The Assembly at once ordered a large portion of their militia to be organized into a brigade and placed under the command of General John Stark. He had served with credit and honor in the previous French war, and as Colonel at Bunker Hill, and in Canada, and under Washington at Trenton and Princeton; but Congress had promoted junior officers over him, and he had resigned his commission and retired from the service, though he retained the same patriotic ardor as before. He was reluctant to be placed under officers he had formerly outranked, and there was also at the time a very general distrust in New England of Gen. Schuyler, who was in command of northern department; for which reasons Gen. Stark's written instructions were of a discretionary character. He was directed "to repair to Charlestown, No. 4," and when the troops were collected there, "to take the command of them and march into the State of Vermont, and there act in conjunction with the troops of that State, or any other of the States, or of the United States, or separately, as it should appear expedient to him, for the protection of the people or the annoyance of the enemy."

Crossing the Green Mountains from Charlestown with the greater part of his command, Stark reached Manchester on the 7th of August, where he met Gen. Lincoln, who had been sent from Stillwater by Gen. Schuyler to conduct his militia to the west bank of the Hudson. Stark communicated his instructions and declined obedience on the ground of the dangerous condition in which it would leave the people of Vermont, and because he believed Burgoyne would be more embarrassed in his operations by his remaining on his left than by joining the army in front. But for this refusal of Stark, which was founded on the soundest military view of the state of affairs, Bennington would have been in a measure defenceless, and would, doubtless, have fallen a prey to the enemy.

At Manchester, Stark, finding that a large body of the enemy, which for some time had been at Castleton, threatening Manchester

and also desiring to cross over to Connecticut river, had marched to the Hudson, he, with his force, passed on to Bennington, where he arrived on the 9th. He was accompanied by Col. Warner, whose continental regiment was left at Manchester under the command of Lieut. Colonel Samuel Safford. At Bennington, Gen. Stark encamped for a few days, collecting information in regard to the position and designs of the enemy, and consulting with the Council of Safety, and with Col. Warner, relative to future operations.

The progress of Burgoyne towards Albany had been so retarded by the natural difficulties of the route, and the obstructions thrown in his way by the Americans, that it was nearly a month after his departure from Ticonderoga before he reached the Hudson river. Here he found himself so deficient in provisions, and also in cattle and carriages for transportation, that he was much embarrassed about the means for advancing further. Learning that the articles he most needed had been collected in considerable quantities at Bennington as a convenient depot to supply the American forces, he resolved to seize them for the use of his own army.

For this service, Lieut. Col. Baume was selected. Burgoyne in his letter to the English Ministry, states the force under his command to have consisted of 200 dismounted dragoons, "Captain Frazer's marksmen (called, also, rangers), which were the only British, all the Canadian volunteers, a party of Provincials, (Col. Peter's corps of Tories,) 100 Indians and two light pieces of cannon, the whole detachment amounting to about 500 men." There is no doubt this number is too small by several hundreds. The German official accounts give the number of the troops of Baume at 374 instead of 200; and of the British, Canadians and Tories, the prisoners taken in the action amounted to 230 as will be seen hereafter, which would swell Baume's force to over 600, without reckoning those who were killed in battle and the many who escaped by flight. There can be little doubt that the number of men brought into action by Baume exceeded 700, besides his 100 Indians. Col. Skene, at the request of Burgoyne, had accompanied the expedition, that the German commander might have the benefit of his better knowledge of the country, and of his supposed influence with its people.

PREPARING FOR THE BATTLE.

Baume set off with his force on the 13th of August, and arrived the same day at Cambridge, 16 miles from Bennington. Early the next morning he reached Sancoick, a small settlement near the mouth of the White Creek branch of the Walloomsac river, about half a mile below the present village of North Hoosick. He found a party of Americans in possession of a mill which they abandoned on his approach, and in the mill, on the head of a barrel, he wrote Burgoyne an account of his progress, informed him that "by five prisoners taken here they agree that 1500 to 1800 men are at Bennington, *but are supposed to leave on our approach.*"

They did leave on his approach, but not in the direction he had anticipated. The old mill at Sancoick is still standing and in use by John Burke, the present owner, and is about 8 miles from Bennington.

Gen. Stark on the 13th had received information from scouts that a party of Indians was at Cambridge, and he sent Lieut-Col. Gregg, of his brigade, with 200 men, to stop their progress ; but during the night he was advised that a large body of troops, with artillery, were in the rear of the Indians, and that they were advancing towards Bennington. He immediately sent to Manchester for Col. Warner's continental regiment, and also for neighboring militia to rally to his support. On the morning of the 14th he assembled his brigade, and in company with Colonels Warner, Williams, Herrick, and Brush, went out to meet the enemy. He had marched about five miles when he met Gregg on his retreat from Sancoick and the enemy in close pursuit. Stark drew up his men in order of battle, but Baume halted in a commanding position, and the ground occupied by Stark being unfavorable for a general attack, he fell back about a mile and encamped. His encampment was in the north-west part of Bennington, on the farm formerly owned by Paul M. Henry, on the hill, upon which a new dwelling has lately been erected by Lewis Northouse, the present proprietor.

The Walloomsac river is a branch of the Hoosick, fordable in most places, having in general a westerly course, but which after passing Stark's encampment runs in a northerly direction for half a mile, then westerly for a mile and a half, where it turns suddenly to the south and pursues that course for three-quarters of a mile or more. Here, on the west side of the river, Baume halted and made his arrangements for defence. On the top of a thickly wooded hill which rises abruptly three or four hundred feet from the west bank of the stream, he posted the greater part of his Germans, under his own immediate command. This position was west of the sudden bend in the stream, and Baume's front to the east was well secured against an attack by the precipitous ascent of the hill on that side, which impracticable ascent extended from his camp for half a mile along the bank of the river to the bridge at the southern foot of the hill, over which the road from Bennington to Sancoick and Cambridge passed. On the top of this hill, Baume prepared entrenchments of earth and logs to resist attacks from the west and on his flanks.

For the defence of the important pass at the bridge Baume caused a strong breastwork to be thrown up on the high bank of the river, on which was mounted one of his cannons, in charge of a body of German Grenadiers. Two small breastworks were also erected on opposite sides of the road, near the west end of the bridge which were manned by Frazer's marksmen ; and the position was still further strengthened by posting all the Canadians in log huts which were standing near the bridge, on both sides of the river. This point is where the river is now crossed by the covered railroad

bridge, about three miles from North Bennington on the route to Troy.

Baume on his way from the Hudson, and at his encampment, had been joined by a considerable number of Tories, many of them under the lead of Col. Francis Pfister, a half-pay British officer of wealth and extensive influence who occupied an imposing residence erected by him on the west bank of the Hoosick, near what is now known as Hoosick Corners. These, with most of Peters' corps of loyalists, were posted on a hill east of the stream, 40 to 50 rods to the south-east of the bridge. Here strong works of defence were erected, known as the "Tory Breast Work," and of which Col. Pfister is understood to have been placed in command. On its right was a sharp ravine, and both flanks would have the protection of ball and grape from the cannon at the bridge. The other cannon, in charge of German grenadiers, supported by some Tories, appears to have been placed further to the west in a cleared field near the road. It was on a hill side which overlooked and commanded the approaches to the bridge and to the Tory encampment, and also to the south flank of Baume's encampment. It may have been moved nearer to Baume's position during the engagement. (The several positions of Baume's forces are shown by the plan in Burgoyne's account of his expedition, of which a copy on a reduced scale is given in the "Memorials of a Century," by the Rev. Isaac Jennings, and another still smaller is found in Lossing's Field book of the Revolution. The top of the map is west, and upon it the Tories are designated as "American Volunteers," the British markmen as "Rangers," the Americans as "Bodies of the Enemy." All others, except the "Canadians," are Germans, the "Chassures" being German marksmen. On Burgoyne's map, the Walloomsac is called the Hoosick.) The encampments of the two hostile bodies, though little more than two miles apart, were entirely hid from the sight of each other by a heavily wooded intervening hill.

The force under Gen. Stark was composed of the greater part of his brigade of New Hampshire militia, a small number of Vermont militia from the east side of the mountain, under Col. William Williams, who had been stationed at Manchester, Col. Herrick's corps of rangers then forming, the State militia from Bennington and its vicinity, under Col. Nathaniel Brush, and on the morning of the 16th Stark was joined by Col. Simonds and some militia from Berkshire County, the Pittsfield men being accompanied by their pastor, the Rev. Thomas Allen, who entered into the battle with them, and handled his musket with bravery and skill. His whole force might perhaps have numbered about 1600.

On the night of the 14th, after ascertaining the position of the enemy, Stark called a council consisting of the leading members of the Council of Safety as well as of Colonels Warner and Herrick and other military officers, in which a plan for attacking the enemy was discussed and adopted, and it was agreed that the attack should be made the next morning. But the 15th was so excessively rainy as

to prevent any attempt at a general action. Scouts were, however, sent out, some of which were engaged in successful skirmishes.

THE BATTLE.

The morning of the 16th was bright and clear, and Stark prepared for the attack in accordance with the plan previously agreed upon. Col. Nichols, with two hundred of the New Hampshire troops, to whom a reinforcement of 100 was afterward added, was detached to make a wide circuit to the north of Baume's post and come round upon the rear of his left, and Col. Herrick, with 300 men composed of his rangers and Col. Brush's militia, was to make a like wide southern circuit to the rear of his right, the two parties to meet and make a joint attack upon his entrenchments. Cols. Hubbard and Stickney, with 300 men of Stark's brigade, were ordered to the enemy's extreme right. While these three detachments were gaining their assigned positions, the enemy was amused by a threatened attack on their front. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, firing was commenced by the party under Nichols, which was the signal for a general assault. It was immediately followed by the detachment under Herrick, and by that of Hubbard* and Stickney, while Stark himself, with his reserve of New Hampshire men and the Berkshire and some Vermont militia, in the face of the enemy's cannon, assailed the Tory breastwork and the pass at the bridge in front. The engagement thus became general, and lasted, says Stark in his report to Gates, "two hours, and was the hottest I ever saw; it represented one continued clap of thunder." The Indians, alarmed at the prospect of being enclosed between the parties of Nichols and

Herrick, fled at the beginning of the fight; but Baume, with his Germans, and all others under his command, having the advantage of their position behind entrenchments which the rain of the 15th had given them ample time to erect and make strong, fought with great resolution and bravery; but they were overpowered by their militia assailants, and either fled or surrendered prisoners of war.

The battle being ended, and the prisoners sent off to Bennington under a proper guard, the militia dispersed to look over the field and collect plunder. But very soon intelligence was brought that a large additional force from the British army was approaching, and within the distance of two miles. This body of men was under the command of Col. Breyman, and consisted, besides 22 officers, of 620 rank and file, all Germans, with two pieces of cannon, which Burgoyne, on hearing that the force at Bennington was greater than had been expected, had dispatched to reinforce Baume. The rain of the preceding day and the heaviness of the roads had delayed Breyman's arrival until the victory over the men he had been sent to aid had been accomplished. The victors were, however, in great confusion, and it appeared difficult to stop the progress of the new

*Hubbard is the name given by Gen. Stark in his letter to Gates, and by most writers. By some it has been written *Hobart*, which is perhaps the correct orthography.

enemy. Happily at this juncture Warner's regiment of about 140 men, which had been delayed by the rain in its march from Manchester, came up fresh under Lieut. Col. Safford, and took its position in front, serving as a rallying point for the scattered militia. Breyman advanced with his two brass field pieces up the road, with wings of infantry on each side of it, occasionally firing his cannon to clear the way, the Americans slowly retiring before him. When a considerable body of the militia had been collected, a stand was made (about 40 or 50 rods east of the present Walloomsac depot), and Breyman's force brought to a halt. Here he was attacked in front and flanks, a most deadly fire being poured into his ranks from a wooded hill on his left. The action was very severe and continued till after sunset, when many of Breyman's men being killed and wounded, and his artillery horses shot down, he abandoned his cannon and fled. Gen. Stark pursued his flying forces till the approaching darkness rendered it necessary to draw off his men to prevent their firing upon each other. "With one hour more of daylight," says Stark in his official report, "we should have captured the whole body."

EFFECTS OF THE BATTLE.

Among the trophies of this day's victories, were four brass field-pieces, twelve brass drums, 250 sabres, four ammunition wagons, several hundred stand of arms and 658 prisoners, and 207 were left dead on the field. The whole loss of the enemy could not have been much less than 900 men. Some of the contemporaneous accounts make the number still larger. Of the prisoners, 30 were officers, 37 British soldiers, 398 Hessians, 38 Canadians and 155 Tories. Col. Baume was mortally wounded and taken prisoner, as was also Col. Pfister, the commander of the Tory entrenchment. Both were taken about a mile to a house in the town of Shaftsbury, which a few years ago was still standing opposite the present paper mill of Charles E. Welling, known as "The Baume House," in which they both died within a day or two afterwards. The loss of the Americans, in both engagements, was about 30 killed and 40 wounded.

This victory, in which undisciplined husbandmen with their hunting guns without bayonets, bravely stormed entrenchments manned by regular troops and defended by cannon, is justly styled by Bancroft as "one of the most brilliant and eventful of the war." The loss of the enemy in men and material was severely felt. But the consequences were otherwise still more important. By inspiring confidence on one side and depressing the spirits of the other, the current of success was at once turned from the British to the American arms. The fate of Burgoyne and his army was, in effect, sealed at Bennington, and his final capture well assured. Gen. Washington, on being informed of the event, considered it as deciding the fate of Burgoyne, and dismissed his anxiety about his invasion. Its effect upon the enemy was most disheartening.—